

One solution - global revolution!

Statement by the League for the Fifth International

Revolutions are the driving force of history. This has been proven once again by the Arab Spring and the general strikes and mass mobilisations in Greece and other European countries. Dictators like Ben Ali and Mubarak who oppressed their people for decades were overthrown in a matter of weeks by mass uprisings and strikes.

The Arab Spring inspired millions around the world. It inspired the Occupy movement in the US, the Indignados in Spain. It developed alongside mass movements in the Asian continent like the daily strikes in China, the millions of women and workers in India and the miners' strikes in South Africa.

Around the world, there have been even many revolutionary situations, but not all of them turned into revolutions. In Greece, despite dozens of one-day general strikes, a pro-austerity, neoliberal government remained in place because the union leaders and the left parties would not launch an all-out, indefinite general strike to bring it down. They would not fight for a workers' government to stop the austerity, renounce the debt and call for the working people of Europe and the Middle East to follow their example.

Even in Tunisia and Egypt, where the old dictators were driven out by democratic revolutions spearheaded by youth and workers, two years on, we can see that shaking the rule of the generals, or driving out the old, corrupted agents of the US and European imperialists, did not lead to the full democracy or the social justice that the youth, women and trade unionists fought and died for.

In Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, political Islamist forces are now aiming to rob the mass movements of their gains. They are trying to install their own reactionary regimes with the thinnest of democratic facades. They are

targeting national and religious minorities, violating the rights of women and youth, even assassinating trade unionists and leaders of left wing and socialist parties.

In Libya, they hijacked the revolutionary struggle against Gaddafi in coalition with European and US imperialism. In Syria, both Islamist and pro-imperialist liberal forces aim to monopolise the leadership of the heroic struggle against Assad, who would have fallen long ago without the backing of Russian and Chinese imperialism. Syria's agony is being prolonged by inter-imperialist rivalry.

Crisis of capitalism

Since 2008, we have seen the opening of the biggest crisis of capitalism since the Second World War. We have seen billions spent to bail out the banks; we have seen cuts and attacks that further impoverish the workers, the peasants, the poor and even parts of the middle classes. We have seen environmental disasters, we have seen moves to redivide the world by the old imperialist powers - the US, the dominating countries of the European Union, like Germany, France or Britain - but also by emerging imperialisms like Russia and China.

This will continue. Global capitalism provides no other way out of the crisis. Mass unemployment, destruction of democratic rights, hunger and starvation are the result of the policy of capitalist and imperialist governments and their global institutions like the IMF and the World Bank.

Misleadership is the main reason why the heroic struggles of the last two years have not yet achieved their aims. The workers and poor still live in poverty. Women's rights are again under threat. Even the basic democratic rights are far from secure when strikes and workers' organisations are under attack by the police and military forces,

the same repressive machine as decades ago, or from reactionary racist and even fascist gangs.

In order to secure the gains made in the first phases of the revolutions, we need to go further. As the great French revolutionary, St Just, argued, a revolution that stops halfway, digs its own grave.

In order to go forward, the working class needs to come to the head of the struggles. It needs to organise itself independently from other political and social forces. Only then will it be able to provide a leadership for the revolutions in the Arab world as well as in Greece and other countries.

Working class independence means that workers must have their own political party. Such a party needs an action programme to fulfil the democratic and social demands of the masses. And this requires a revolutionary strategy, which leads from the different daily struggles to the conquest of power. It requires a programme that addresses the need of the masses and uproots the real cause of misery, exploitation and oppression - the global capitalist system.

Key lessons of the last years

1. The current crisis shows that our rulers, the political parties, military forces and the media controlled by the capitalists, the big landlords or corrupt officials will never give up their power peacefully or voluntarily. They will cling on to power with all the means in their possession.

2. Capitalism in whatever form provides no solution for the mass of the people. Even if we overthrow the Mubaraks, Ben Alis, Gadaffis and soon, hopefully, the Assads, capitalism, and its state institutions, military, secret services, paramilitary police or reactionary gangs, will still need to be uprooted, destroyed and replaced by a different social and economic system.



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3. The last years demonstrated again that such a system cannot be AgreformedAh away or gradually improved. If the revolution does not go forward and smash the instruments of repression, mobilising the people to arm themselves and winning over the rank and file soldiers, then counterrevolution will raise its head soon enough. To limit the revolutions to the struggle for bourgeois democracy, a parliamentary system and social reforms is a utopian strategy that will lead to defeat.

4. Women's rights are a litmus test for distinguishing progressive from reactionary forces worldwide. The liberation of women from all forms of male tutelage, from second-class citizenship, from domestic slavery, from lower wages, from rape and harassment, is a vital part of the democratic and the class struggle. The truth of the slogan Agno socialism without women's liberation and no women's liberation without socialismAh extends to democracy, too. The mass movement against rape in India, and the leading role of women within the movements in the Arab world, show we are witnessing a new uprising of women around the world.

5. The last two years have proved that outright reactionary forces, who played only a minor part in the main struggles that overthrew the dictators, can gain leadership if those struggles do not go on to challenge the system itself. As long as they have real social support, we must demand that the misleaders mobilise their support in common action against our class enemies - but we should not wait for them. Everywhere, we need to create new mass organs of struggle; councils of delegates from the unions, the parties of the working class and from the poor quarters of the cities and the villages.

6. Instead of bourgeois and reformist politics, we need a different strategy, one which links the struggle for democratic rights (freedom to organise, to assemble, for women's rights, for an agrarian revolution, independence from imperialism) and a Constituent Assembly under the control of the masses, and the struggle for social rights (public works for the unemployed, minimum wages and income; social security and welfare for the masses, decent housing, health and education) to the struggle for working class power.

7. The rule of capitalism and imperialism can only really be challenged if the workers, in alliance with the peasantry, the poor, the youth and the women, seize power and establish a workers', or a workers' and peasants', government.

8. Basing itself on the mass organisations, such a government would have to take decisive steps; expropriate the banks, large industrial and commercial companies and re-

organise production according to people's needs, and under a democratic plan. It would also expropriate the large landowners and hand over the land to those who work it.

9. To implement this programme, a revolutionary workers' and peasant government would have to do more than pass laws or decrees, it would have to destroy the ability of the ruling class to defend itself. It would need to smash the police and military apparatus which represses the people, and replace it by workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils and by arming the people in militias to defend the revolution.

10. While each is unique, the Arab Spring, the Greek uprising, the mass movements over the last years, are all a response to the crisis of a global system which threatens humanity with more exploitation, misery and even fascism; with imperialist wars and occupation. We can only be free from this global system if we generalise and organise our resistance internationally; if we spread the revolutions across the borders and fight for socialist federations in Africa and the Middle East, in Europe etc. - a step towards the

socialist transformation of the whole planet.

11. For this, we argue that the WSE, and all other international gatherings aiming to fight neo-liberalism, should combine their forces for an international fight-back and take real steps to set up an international coordination to force our rulers onto the defensive.

12. But, we also propose that all forces of the working class and the left who aim to go beyond defensive struggle and resistance, to win the movement to an anti-capitalist, revolutionary and socialist perspective, need to engage in:

a) establishing international links of practical collaboration to make our struggle more determined, more radical and better co-ordinated;

b) a political discussion to combine their forces around a revolutionary action programme for the creation of new revolutionary parties and a new, revolutionary, working class international, a Fifth International.

Who are the Fifth Internationalists?

The League for the Fifth International is a revolutionary organisation. Our goal is to build a world party of socialist revolution, fighting around the world for an end to capitalism, imperialism and for socialism. We base our programme - From Protest to Power and our manifesto From Resistance to Revolution - on the programmes of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, and the Internationals they founded. Our day-to-day practice is founded on these works and their revolutionary example.

The struggle against capitalism is an international struggle. As Marx wrote in 1848, the working class has no country. The fight against capitalism must be an international one, uniting socialists across the world in resistance to the system.

The working class has had four previous working class international parties. None of them now exists as a revolutionary force. Yet, in a globalised world, during a historically long crisis, never was one more necessary. In short, the working class needs a Fifth International. We are not it, but we are an international organisation, as yet weak in numbers, fighting for it.

The League has sections in Austria, Britain, Germany, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the USA. We work with socialists in Brazil, France, Russia, Nepal and the Czech Republic. In Europe, we campaign within the trade unions and social movements, uniting workers and young people across the continent.

In Sri Lanka, our comrades have a long history of trade union struggle and supporting the Tamils against the chauvinist government. In Pakistan, our section was born in the movement against dictatorship and now actively opposes the "War on Terror" and supports trade union struggles against the endemic poverty. Today, these comrades work in newly formed Awami Workers' Party.

We stand for working class independence and consistent revolutionary politics. We fight all forms of racist discrimination and violence, all denial of equal rights from the state forces to immigrants. We fight for a workers' united front against reactionary populist or fascist gangs.

We stand for the liberation of women from oppression, for a working class women's movement, and for rank and file movements in the unions to rid them of bureaucracy. We fight to build revolutionary parties based on a transitional programme and practising the democratic centralism of Lenin and the Bolsheviks - freedom of internal debate and discussion; disciplined unity in action.

We fight youth oppression and work in political solidarity with Revolution, the international socialist youth movement.